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NOTES ON GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION

Reptilia, Squamata, Colubridae, *Chironius exoletus*: distribution extension, new state record.

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The genus *Chironius* Fitzinger currently comprises 13 species (Dixon et al. 1993) of diurnal terrestrial-arboreal colubrids, of medium to large size (over 200 cm), cylindrical or compressed body, with 10 or 12 dorsal scales rows to the midbody, dorsal scales largest, smooth or keeled, with apical pits, head differentiated from neck, eyes prominent, pupil round, and moderate to very long tail. This genus is distributed from Nicaragua, Central America, San Vincent island in the Caribbean sea, to southern Brazil and Argentina in South America (Peters and Orejas-Miranda 1970; Dixon et al. 1993). In Venezuela the genus is widely distributed from sea level to 2500 m (Lancini 1982), and six species currently are known: *C. carinatus* (Linnaeus, 1758), *C. exoletus* (Linnaeus, 1758), *C. fuscus* (Linnaeus, 1758), *C. monticola* Roze, 1952, *C. multiventris* Schmidt & Walker, 1943, and *C. scurrulus* (Wagler, 1824) (Lancini and Kornacker 1986; Dixon et al. 1993; La Marca 1997).

Chironius exoletus has a very wide distribution through South America (northeastern Argentina, eastern and Amazonian Brazil, Bolivia, eastern Peru and Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, Guyana, Surinam and French Guiana), to Panama and Costa Rica in Central America. In Venezuela it has been only reported from the states of Amazonas, Bolivar and Delta Amacuro (McDiarmid and Paolillo 1988; Dixon et al. 1993; Rivas and La Marca 2001), all south of Orinoco River.

During a field herpetological survey carried out in "El Progreso" farm, upper basin of Socuy river, western slope Sierra de Perijá, Jesús Enrique Lossada municipality, Zulia state, northwestern Venezuela (c. 10°47' N, 72°26' W, c. 800 m a.s.l.) (Figure 1), between 23 to 26 February 2006, we found a specimen of *C. exoletus* (Figure 2). The snake was active at 11:00 h dwelling on herbaceous vegetation at the edge of primary forest.

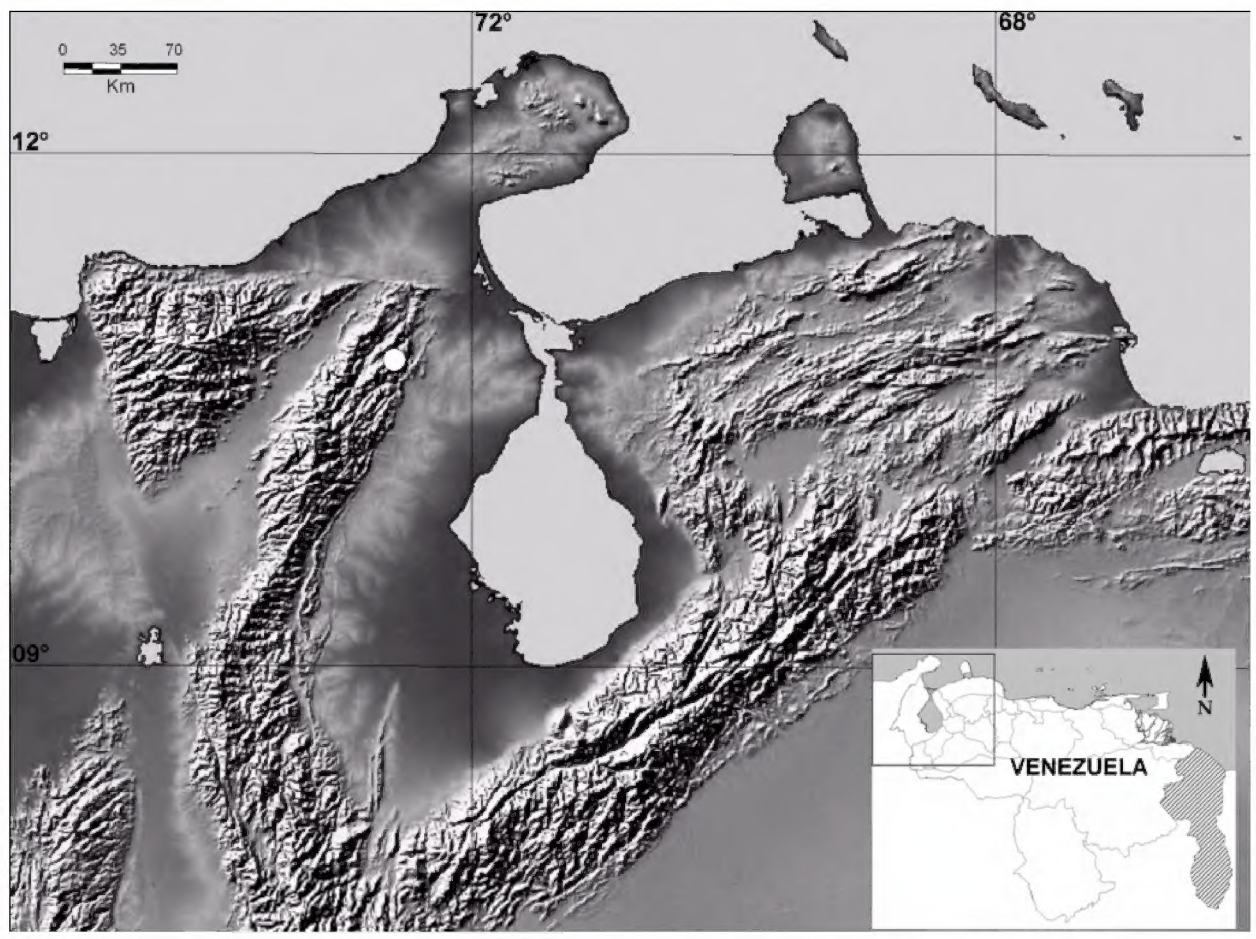

Figure 1. White dot shown "El Progreso" farm, first locality record form Zulia state (Venezuela), northward in the country and South America from *Chironius exoletus*.

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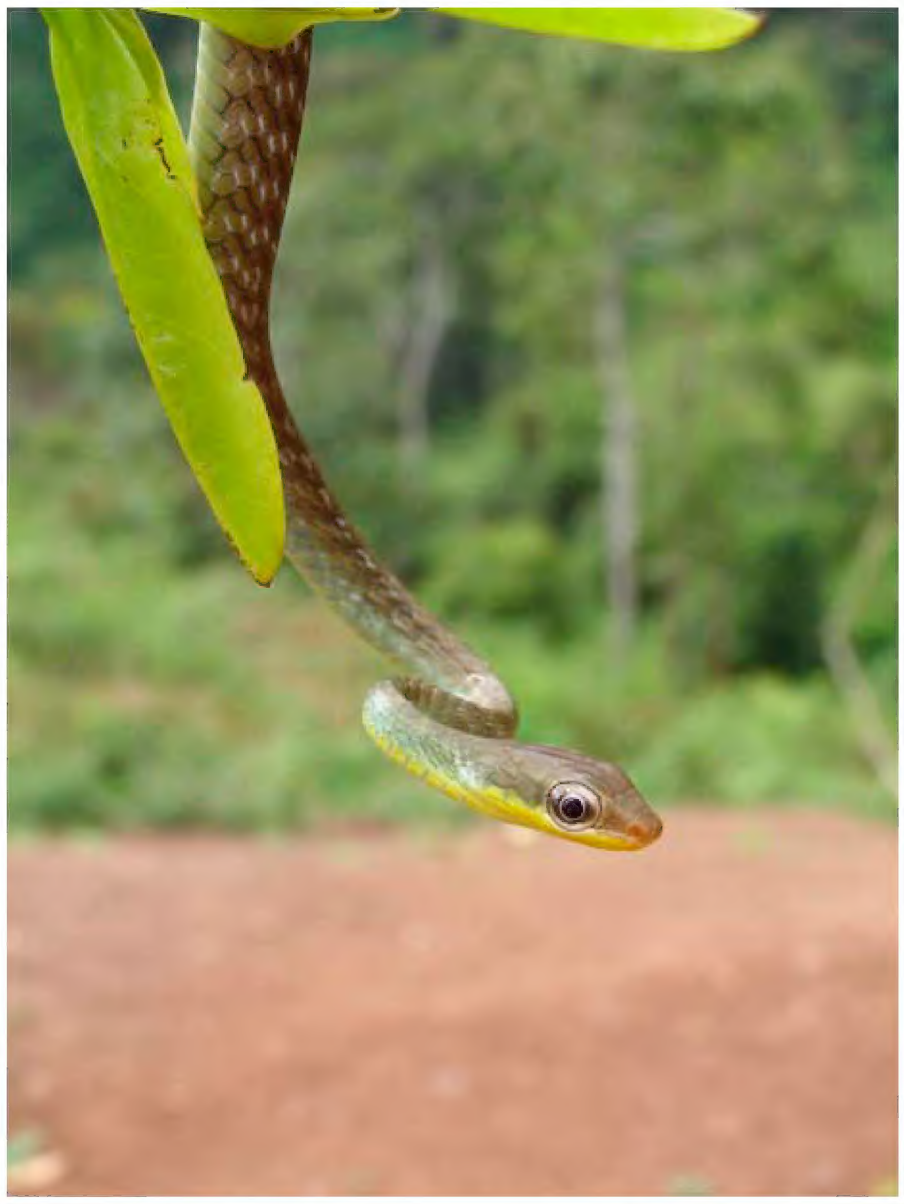

Figure 2. Juvenile male of *Chironius exoletus* (MHNLS 17931). Photo by F. Rojas-Runjaic.

Our specimen is a juvenile male (hemipenes partially everted) snout-vent length 293 mm; tail length 185 mm; nasals divided; internasals, prefrontals, and parietals paired; frontal single; loreal present; preoculars 1/1, postoculars 2/2, temporals 1+2, supralabials 9(5+6), infralabials 11(6+7), two pairs of chin shields; infralabials one through six in contact with anterior chin shields, six and seven in contact with posterior chin shields; 12-12-8 scale row formula, dorsal scales with apical pits and only paravertebral rows keeled; ventral scales 150, subcaudals 160 divided, anal plate divided, and 28 maxillary teeth. These characters allow us to identify this specimen as *C. exoletus*, and to discriminate this from *C. carinatus* (a sympatric species and very common in the Sierra de Perijá), and the all others species of the genus.

This is the first record for the species from Zulia state in Venezuela, northward in the country and South America. The nearest locality reported is Arboledas, Norte de Santander, Colombia, c. 380 km NE (Dixon et al. 1993), and c. 1200 km NW from Monte Duida, Amazonas state, Venezuela (McDiarmid and Paolillo 1988). The voucher is deposited in the herpetological collection of the Museo de Historia Natural La Salle (Caracas, Venezuela) with number MHNLS 17931.

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